

II. Remarks

With the amendments herein, claims 1-3, 6, 8-16, 18-21, 24, 26-34, 36-39, 42, 44-52, and 54-60 are pending in the application. Claims 3 and 39 have been withdrawn, claims 4, 5, 7, 17, 22, 23, 25, 35, 40, 41, 43, and 53 have been cancelled, claims 1, 2, 6, 8-16, 18-21, 24, 26-34, 36-38, 42, 44-52, and 54-57 have been rejected, claims 58-60 have been added, and claims 1, 2, 20, and 38 have been amended. In view of the remarks provided herewith, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 6, 8-16, 18-21, 24, 26-34, 36-38, 42, 44-52, and 54-57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,108,418 to Lefebvre (Lefebvre), in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,147,649 to Thomas (Thomas). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully assert that Lefebvre and Thomas, even in combination, fail to teach all of the limitations of currently amended claim 1, and therefore, these references even in combination fail to render claim 1 obvious. For example, claim 1, from which claims 2, 6, 8-16, 18, 19, 56, and 57 generally depend, recites that a set of non-parallel secondary struts is connected to one primary strut. Lefebvre has no secondary struts, and Thomas specifically recites that the arms 22-1c' and 22-1c" are *parallel* fork arms (Col. 4, lines 36-39). Therefore, Applicants respectfully assert that even in combination, Lefebvre and Thomas fail to teach, suggest, or disclose a set of non-parallel secondary struts connected to a primary strut. Since the references fail to teach each and every element of the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 1, and claims 2, 6, 8-16, 18, 19,

56, and 57 dependent therefrom, are in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully assert that Lefebvre and Thomas, even in combination, fail to teach all of the limitations of independent claims 20 and 38, and therefore, these references even in combination fail to render these claims obvious. For example, independent claims 20 and 38, from which claims 21, 24, 26-34, 36, 37, 42, 44-52, 54, and 55 generally depend, are currently amended to recite that the secondary strut and the first curved portion of the primary strut have substantially the same radius of curvature. Lefebvre does not disclose secondary struts, and the parallel fork arms 22-1c' and 22-1c'' of Thomas do not have substantially the same radius of curvature as the primary struts. Thus, even if the arms 22-1c' and 22-1c'' of Thomas were attached to the struts of Lefebvre, they would not have substantially the same radius of curvature as the first curved portions of Lefebvre's struts, as recited in claims 20 and 38. Indeed, the Thomas arms 22-1c' and 22-1c'' are straight and parallel to each other. Since the arms of Thomas are straight, they do not have substantially the same radius of curvature as the curved struts of Lefebvre. Therefore, because Thomas and Lefebvre even in combination fail to disclose all of the elements of claims 20 and 38, Applicant respectfully asserts that these references fail to render claims 20 and 38 unpatentable over the art of record. Accordingly, claims 20 and 38 are in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested. Further, since claims 21, 24, 26-34, 36, 37, 42, 44-52, 54, and 55 are generally dependent from one of claims 20 and 38, these claims are also in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

New Claims

Claims 58-60 have been added. These claims generally depend from one of claims 1 and 20, which are patentable for at least the reasons given above. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 58-60 are also patentable for at least these reasons, and such action is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot, and that pending claims 1-3, 6, 8-16, 18-21, 24, 26-34, 36-39, 42, 44-52, and 54-60 as amended, are patentable. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (734) 302-6022.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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